

Minnesota Environmental Quality Board



PUBLIC NOTICE

**Trimont Area Wind Farm, LLC
Large Wind Energy Conversion System
Martin and Jackson Counties
Certificate of Need Application**

Public Meeting

**February 3, 2004
Trimont, Minnesota**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Trimont Area Wind Farm, LLC (Trimont), has applied to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a certificate of need for a large wind energy conversion system of approximately 100 megawatts. The Minnesota Environmental Quality Board will prepare an Environmental Report on the project. A public meeting will be held at the Trimont Community Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 3, 2004.

a.) Project Description

The Trimont Area Wind Farm Project is a Large Wind Energy Conversion System of approximately 100 MW comprising up to 67 turbines with a nameplate capacity of 1.5 MW and associated facilities like access roads and power lines. The project will be located in Jackson and Martin Counties, six miles west of the city of Trimont, on approximately 22,400 acres in Kimball and Cedar townships. The project is to be sited in the area surrounding Great River Energy's Lakefield Junction Generating Station, a 550 MW natural gas peaking plant. The project will be connected to the electrical grid at Xcel Energy's Martin County Substation, located at the Lakefield Junction Generating Station.

The turbine manufacturer is General Electric Company. The wind turbines will be 80 meters high at the hub and the blades will have a rotor diameter of either 70.5 or 77 meters. At the base of each turbine will be a "step-up" transformer. A network of access roads and underground power and communication cables will also be installed.

b.) Certificate of Need Application

The Trimont wind project is a “large energy facility” as defined in Minnesota Statutes § 216B.2421, subp. 2, and a certificate of need from the Public Utilities Commission is required for such a project under Minnesota Statutes § 216B.243. Trimont filed a certificate of need application with the PUC on November 18, 2003. PUC Docket No. IP-6339/CN-03-1841. The PUC accepted the application as complete with the supplemental information that was filed Monday, January 12, 2004.

The PUC has authorized the holding of a contested case hearing on the application. An administrative law judge will be assigned to preside at the hearing. The actual hearing will be held shortly after the EQB completes preparation of the Environmental Report. The PUC has six months from January 12 to complete the process and make a decision on the certificate of need application. Under state law, the PUC proceeding is the only time at which the “no-build” alternative and the size, type, and timing of a new generating facility will be considered. These items will not be readdressed in the EQB Site Permit process.

c.) EQB Environmental Report

Under Minnesota Rules parts 4410.7010 to 4410.7070, the EQB is responsible for preparing an Environmental Report on any proposed large energy facility for which a certificate of need from the Public Utilities Commission is required under Minnesota Statutes § 216B.243. The Environmental Report is a written document that describes the human and environmental impacts of the proposed facility, alternatives to the project, and methods to mitigate anticipated adverse impacts. The Environmental Report must be prepared before the PUC can make a decision on the certificate of need application.

The Environmental Quality Board will provide the public with an opportunity to participate in the determination of the scope of the Environmental Report. Public comment can be made to the address below until February 24, 2004. Once the scope is determined, the EQB will prepare the Environmental Report by no later than May 12, 2004. The Environmental Report will be introduced into the record at the hearing and the EQB staff will be available to answer questions about information in the Report.

d.) Public Meeting

The EQB will hold a public information meeting on the project at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 3, 2004, in the Trimont Community Room, 41 2nd Avenue NW, Trimont, Minnesota. The purpose of the public meeting is to inform the public of the Trimont project and to gather public input into the scope of the Environment Report. The meeting provides the public with an opportunity to ask questions about the project and to suggest alternatives and impacts to address in the Environmental Report.

e.) Available Information

All pertinent information regarding this matter, including the certificate of need application and the Environmental Report when it is completed, can be accessed at <http://www.eqb.mn.us> or by contacting David Birkholz at 651.296.2878 or at EQB, 658 Cedar Street, 300 Centennial Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155.

f.) Eminent Domain

Trimont Area Wind Farm, LLC, does not have the power of eminent domain to acquire the land necessary for this project.

g.) Mailing List

Any person may add his or her name to a mailing list maintained by the EQB for future mailings regarding the Trimont project. Names can be added to the list by contacting Mr. Birkholz or electronically by visiting the EQB website:

<http://www.eqb.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=5208>

h.) EQB Wind Site Permit

Trimont will also be applying to the Environmental Quality Board for a Wind Site Permit for the project. The EQB will administer the permit application under the wind rules, Minnesota Rules chapter 4401, at the same time it is preparing the Environmental Report for the PUC process. A draft site permit will be available a few weeks following the actual application. The EQB will use the same mailing list created for the certificate of need application to notify interested persons of matters regarding the permit.